

563 constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a
622 democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

621 The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized

• 602 possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

[578] The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grandfather is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubukamu*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

33

Theoretically the territorial arrangement is one in which the villages of the ruling generation lie at the centre of the country, each surrounded by satellite villages of their sons, while smaller villages of old men lie on the boundaries. In practice—at least nowadays—the pattern is more complex, with old men's villages squeezed in between those of the ruling generation. From the time of its establishment as a separate chiefdom at the 'coming out', the future division of the country is adumbrated: there is a senior headman in each half of the country with villages subordinate to him, and the mother of an heir in each half. On the boundary between the halves stand the ritual trees, landmarks for all to see. 631 621

Age and locality coincide, while kinship cuts across local grouping, fathers and sons, and very often brothers, being in different villages. But kinsmen tend to be established in the same side of a country, and so to remain within one chiefdom. Kinship terms are extended in some measure to the villages of the chiefdom, which are classified as those of 'our fathers', 'our elder brothers', 'our young brothers', and 'our sons'. Women have no direct share in the age-organization: their membership of a village turns on their relationship to some man—father, husband, husband's heir—and the age-range of women within one village is very wide. 621 602

Villages vary considerably in size. Boys' villages, as we have seen, begin with a dozen members or less, and the villages of old men are often very small also; we knew one with only 10 households, another with 11. The villages of young and middle-aged men commonly vary between 20 and 50 households, with 30 as a fair average in the hills. In Mwaipopo's country there were 540 taxpayers on the roll and we recorded 19 established villages and 6 boys' villages.¹ Some members of the boys' villages, and some elderly men, were not on the tax-roll, so that the average was over 20 boys or men in each village. Villages in the plain are somewhat larger, averaging around 40 households. [562] 621

Men's villages are usually subdivided into sections under the leadership of assistant headmen, appointed by the headman of the village. These assistants do not share in the 'coming out' ceremony. 621 624

¹ *Vide infra*, pp. 181 ff. The tax registers are no guide to the number of villages since in them several villages are commonly lumped together as one under a senior village headman.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

602 THE primary economic units in Nyakyusa society are the kinship
476 groups—the elementary family, the cattle-owing lineage, and the
group of cognates who co-operate in production and exchange
many gifts, and among whom cattle circulate.¹ However, fellow
villagers also work together, exchange food, and have a common
interest in certain property.

a. Land

423 The village is the land-holding group. As we have seen, land
245 is allocated to a boys' village, at its commencement, by the parent
village, that is the village to which the fathers of most of the boys
belong. Little boys' huts are usually to be seen going up on a strip
of pasture-land, adjoining the block of banana groves which
shroud their fathers' houses. The boys' land is primarily a build-
ing site, but very soon after moving into their huts they turn over
the ground and plant banana suckers (*vide* Plate II). Bananas
begin to bear very quickly, and so in a little more than a year after
the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of
their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their
241 friends at odd times during the day. But they have, as yet, no
423 fields, for the cultivation of fields requires the co-operation of a
wife. Bachelors continue to eat their main meals at their parents'
village. As the boys grow up and marry they begin to cultivate
garden-land adjacent to their village. Some of these gardens are
acquired by individuals from their own fathers and fathers-in-
law, but whether there may also be a block grant of garden-land by
the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole we
423 are not certain. In any case the land of boys' villages is limited,
and at the 'coming out' the old men move aside and the young
men enter their inheritance. The allotment to each village is

¹ cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe Brown and Daryll Forde.

f. Housekeeping

356 Every married woman has her own hearth and granary, and
476 she works very largely alone when cooking and cleaning; but in
313 one essential activity women who are neighbours in a village
regularly co-operate, and that is in fetching firewood. We never
saw a woman going alone; usually there is a group of three or four
up to a dozen or more. Firewood must be fetched two or three
times a week, and the journey and the collection of the wood takes
from four to ten hours, depending upon the distance of the
village from a patch of forest or bush. Thus the women spend up
to thirty hours a week fetching wood, and it is with village neigh-
bours that this time is spent, not with relatives from other
villages. If a woman is ill her friends will help in bringing wood
and cooked food for her. Some co-wives co-operate in this way,
fetching wood together, and helping each other in sickness, but
whether they do or not depends upon personal friendship. Often
it is with an unrelated neighbour, rather than with a co-wife, that
a woman works most closely. Only when co-wives are sisters, or
aunt and niece, are they expected to work together regularly.

476 Village neighbours—women—also co-operate in the prepara-
tion of feasts, as we shall see in the following chapter.

g. Economic co-operation beyond the village

476 The economic relations of fellow villagers, and the changes
taking place in these relations, cannot be understood without
some reference to economic co-operation beyond the village
● 612 boundaries. As we have already indicated, co-operation with
relatives living in other villages is very important: cattle, the most
prized possession of the Nyakyusa, circulate within kinship
groups, between father and son, brother and brother, and
between affines, and these same relatives assist one another in
cultivation and building. But beyond the circle of kinsmen and
village-mates there was formerly little economic co-operation.
[438] Each village and kinship group was largely self-sufficient, buying
from outside little save iron spears and hoes, medicines, salt,
cosmetics, and brass or copper wire for ornament.

326 Smiths were essential to the Nyakyusa economy for they

VALUES

83

Another informant added: 'Boys usually move of their own accord; if they don't their fellows mock them saying: "Why do you sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your mother when she puts on her bark-cloth? . . . You sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your father and mother. Perhaps they think you are asleep, but you see them."' 834

Sons and mothers are separated at night, but the boys come to their mothers' houses for food; fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law are completely segregated from the time a girl is betrothed or, if she has been betrothed in infancy, from the time she is about eight years old. Her father-in-law is pointed out once to the newly betrothed girl, and after that she must never look at him. She never enters a house in which he is, and she leaves a path if she catches a glimpse of him, or is warned by her friends that he is approaching; she also avoids his name and anything associated with him, being particularly careful to avoid going near the bed in her mother-in-law's house, should she visit her mother-in-law during her father-in-law's absence. The avoidance is extended to a large group of kinsmen—her father-in-law's brothers and cousins, her mother-in-law's brothers, the husbands of her mother-in-law's sisters, and the fathers-in-law (direct and by extension) of each of her own sisters;¹ but it is *not* extended to the father-in-law's village-mates. In practice, the forms of avoidance vary with the actual relationship—the more distant the connection the less strictly are the rules observed—and with the locality, for the Nyakyusa proper avoid in-laws more carefully than the Kukwe do. A Nyakyusa wife, for example, should *never* enter her father-in-law's house, but a Kukwe wife may do so during his absence. 834
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602●

The Nyakyusa argue, cogently enough, that it would be quite impossible for father-in-law and daughter-in-law to live in the same village and avoid one another as they do; and indeed the difficulties of avoidance are apparent at ceremonies when members of different villages are congregated. Then the women are on the watch all the time, and one or another is constantly taking refuge in a hut, or in the bananas, as her friends warn her of the approach of a 'father-in-law'. The practical difficulties were obvious when we attended a funeral ceremony at Mwambelike's 606

¹ cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde.

621 cannot be appointed as headman in any village of his own genera-
769 tion, and villages of past generations disappear. When a headman
622 dies, his village still being in existence, his place is taken by his
heir who may be a son, but this office is only temporary. The
village ceases to exist when its original members die off. Moreover,
there is no suggestion that the shade of a headman's father broods
over the village as the shade of a chief is thought to brood over
the land he ruled.

775 The Nyakyusa have a lively belief in the power of shades, -a
belief closely connected with the dependence of the members of
a lineage upon one another for cattle,¹ and with the office of
'divine king', but such belief scarcely affects village relationships,
for the shades are not thought to be concerned with behaviour
between neighbours, as distinct from relatives.

775 It is true that the proper performance of family rituals includes
621 feasting neighbours, but the implication always is that the shades
• 602 are concerned only in enforcing obligations towards themselves
and fellow kinsmen, not towards non-relatives. On the other
hand, neighbours are concerned in the enforcement of kinship
obligations. When a son insults his father, the father's neighbours
are insulted also; when a daughter-in-law peeps at her father-in-
law the shocked astonishment of the neighbours may cause her
children to pine. And so, when an erring son begs pardon of his
father, he must provide a feast for the neighbours, 'that they may
see that his father is satisfied'.

775 A situation often arises in which both the shades and 'the breath
626 of men' operate, sometimes 'the breath' of shocked neighbours
754 supporting the shades, and sometimes shades and men each
exacting their due. One illustration of this was given us by
Kalunda: 'If you do not carry out the burial rites for your father,
people are angry, they throttle you, and the shade is angry also,
he comes on your body. No, the witches do not call the ancestors
to help; both are angry on their own account. To-day the black
ones, the witches, come and throttle you; to-morrow the ancestors
come. People are angry because they do not eat meat; the shade
is angry because you did not perform the burial rites for him. He
says: "See, I left much property, why did you not bury me
properly?"' And in discussing the obligation of a daughter-in-

¹ cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936); Monica
Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

754 area, during a given period, so we cannot either assert or deny that accusations of witchcraft are more frequent in age-villages than in kinship villages.

578 There are two sets of loyalties in Nyakyusa society: those to a kinship group and those to an age-village. Does conflict arise from a clash between them? We have no evidence that it does.

621

602 It is true that kin may support a sick relative against his age-group, referring to his illness as due to witchcraft, whereas

neighbours will attribute it to his own sin and their legitimate anger; but very often the ancestors and the 'defenders' are believed to work together to punish wrong-doers—those who break avoidance and incest taboos, those who insult seniors, those who neglect traditional rituals (*vide supra*, p. 122). Amity between relatives is sanctioned by neighbours as well as by senior kinsmen, and the importance of enjoying the company of village mates is constantly stressed by relatives. Where a village does appear to support a member against his kin, it is usually on the side of the ancestors and 'justice', in terms of the Nyakyusa code, as when neighbours share a father's anger at the insolence of his son, or after his death protect his son against unjust treatment by the heir. The values of village solidarity and of kinship solidarity are thus coherent.

e. *The form of witch beliefs*

621 There is, however, a connection between the age-village organization and the *form* of witch beliefs. As we have seen, great emphasis is laid on feasting neighbours, and it is believed that the impulse to witchcraft comes from the lust for milk and meat. 754 The Nyakyusa argue thus: witchcraft comes from neighbours, 626 and neighbours must be fed or they get angry; feeding a witch on milk or beef pacifies him (*vide supra*, p. 92). An explicit connection is made between neglecting to provide feasts on the proper occasions and suffering from 'the breath' of justly angry neighbours whose blighting power springs from the same root as witchcraft. The contrast with the witch beliefs of the Pondo is marked: among them it is held that the drive to witchcraft is sex lust, and all witches have familiars with whom they have sex relations.¹

¹ Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-88.

g. Kith and kin

- 602
621 The tendency to identify neighbours and kinsmen—kith and kin—appears not only in religious belief, the two groups being credited with somewhat similar mystical power; but also in verbal usage—‘fathers of the village’, ‘mothers of the village’, ‘sisters of the village’, etc.; in the obligation to respect a father’s fellows, to run errands for them and obey their orders; in the belief that a father’s neighbours are insulted by an insult to the father, and must be pacified as well as the real father; and in the responsibility of villagers for certain torts of a fellow. The distinction between neighbours and kinsmen is, however, clear-cut in marriage, in rituals, and in the control of cattle. Fellow villagers marry each other’s daughters; they neither perform the elaborate ritual at death or twin birth believed to be necessary for the safety of relatives, nor are they required to help each other with cattle for marriages, funeral rites, and fines, as are kinsmen.¹

Kinsmen are bound together by their common interest in the inherited stock of the lineage and in the cattle coming in for its daughters; by co-operation in cultivation and building; and by the belief that they are mystically interdependent—the contagion of defilement and of certain diseases caused by sorcery travelling along the roads of kinship. Village neighbours are bound together by occupation and ownership of common land; by co-operation in herding and cultivation; and by common defence against enemies ‘by day and by night’. In both groups discipline is thought to be maintained by mystical as well as material sanctions, the anger of neighbours bringing ill-health like the anger of senior relatives; and both groups have certain responsibilities for their members in relations with other like groups.

h. Relative social status

- 621
561 The Nyakyusa material suggests certain further connections between the age-village organization and other aspects of the social structure which comparative study shows to be false. For example, it might be argued for the Nyakyusa (as it has been for

¹ Monica Wilson, ‘Nyakyusa Kinship’ in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

CHAPTER II

BURIAL RITES¹

(a) *The form of burial*

WHENEVER a death takes place, whether of man, woman, or child, 764
a series of funeral rites lasting a month or more begins. The first
of the series is the burial (*ifuwa*) which, in the case of most adults,
lasts three or four days, though for a rich man it may continue for
a week, and for a child it is over in a day. For the sake of con-
venience the account of burial is given mainly in reference to the
burials of men; those of women are very similar and occasional
references are made to them; but the constant qualifications of
statement that would be necessary to give a complete description
of both would be wearisome and are unnecessary for our purpose.

As soon as death occurs the women who are present begin wail- 763
ing and messages are sent to the chief, the village headman, and 764
the dead man's kinsmen and affines, to announce the fact and bid
them to the burial. The first message is sent to the father, or to a
senior brother, if one is still alive, or failing them to the heir of the
dead man, and he it is who sends out the other messages. If the
father or a senior brother is alive the burial may take place at his
homestead, the body being carried there at once; otherwise the
dead man is buried at his own home: the choice rests with his
father. A married woman is buried at her husband's home if she
has borne children, otherwise at her father's; an elderly widow is
buried by her son.

Messages must be sent to all the fathers-in-law and all the sons- 602 ●
in-law both of the dead man and of the senior kinsman who 763
buries him, to all the dead man's full and half-brothers, to the
husbands of his sisters, to any classificatory brothers with whom
he exchanged cows, to his mother's father or brother, to the full
and half-brothers of his father, and to his sons. If any one of these

¹ This description is an amended version of that published by Godfrey Wilson in
'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, 1939. The theoretical analysis differs
somewhat from that offered in the paper, for the ritual element appears to me to be
dominant at the burial as well as in the later 'farewell to the dead'. Between us we
attended thirty funerals, in whole or in part.

602 is forgotten he will be angry: 'It happens sometimes that a kins-
763 man comes in later, after the man is buried, and is very angry because no message was sent to him; he comes in a passion, and perhaps he beats his brother [the one who should have sent him a message]. Then the others catch hold of him and say: "Why do you not come soberly and greet us decently with the appropriate words? Come now, why?" And if he does not stop they beat him.'

602 These kinsmen and affines, with their wives and children, are
764 under obligation to come to the burial, unless they are sick. Young children under the age of 10 or 11 are not obliged to come, though they often do, but older children must do so. One reason for the continuance of the burial ceremonies for three or four days is that this gives time for relatives from a distance to receive the messages and come. Deliberately to refuse to send a message or, on the

[578] other side, to refuse to come to a burial for no good reason, is a symbolic breaking of the bond of kinship and no one ever does either, unless there is a serious quarrel and all economic and social relations are being broken off between the two families concerned.

621 The village neighbours also are obliged to come to every burial
764 in the village. They normally wish to do so, but, even if they do not, they still come for shame or for fear of being accused of witchcraft if they stay away. Where there is friendship the neighbours come in grief and sympathy and quarrels are softened by the fact of death, but, if the memory of enmity still persists, then the last sanctions are shame and fear: 'Some people mourn more than others.' 'The men who knew him say: "Let us go and mourn him."' 'Those who did not know him intimately mourn because each thinks: "He has died, my neighbour, and so will it be with me one day."' 'If I have quarrelled with my neighbour and he dies, I go to his burial for I say to myself: "It is true that while he lived we quarrelled, but now he is dead and we shall never meet again. I too will go to his burial and mourn him."' 'If a village neighbour does not come to a burial we say he is unkindly and unsociable.' 'And if a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?"' Several of the accusations of witchcraft recorded had been occasioned by a man's absence from a village neighbour's funeral. For it is believed that witches are chary of going to the burials of their victims lest the dead should rise and denounce them.

643 A chief normally goes to all burials in his own country, except
764

BURIAL RITES

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it seems as if there was another disease in the corpse itself, it is a stinking mass of disease.' Traditionally they use two medicinal plants to wash with, but in some chiefdoms near mission stations they now wash without them. The chief of one such country explained: 'In the old days they feared very much to eat before bathing—but now sometimes they just wash their hands and eat. Of old they feared death, they feared lest the disease should spread, they wished to rid themselves of the contamination of the corpse. They used to wash with two plants—as medicine. Now they just bathe in the stream or sometimes only just wash their hands.' But, particularly in chiefdoms at a distance from the centres of European influence, the fear of the contagion of death is still very strong. [177]

Death then is, for the majority of pagan Nyakyusa, a fearful as well as a grievous event; less fearful than it used to be to their fathers, but more fearful by far to them than it is to their Christian neighbours. [184]

(c) *The sacrifice*

At all except the very poorest burials one or more head of cattle are killed. Cows are provided whenever possible, but, if no cows are available, bulls may be used instead. If the man who has died left cattle of his own, one at least of his herd is killed; if he has left none, his family make every effort to buy or borrow one, or else they provide one themselves from their own herds. If the dead man was rich, several of his cows will be killed. If his senior son has cattle of his own, he should kill one for his father (*ikumbamba*) and if there are a number of grown-up sons the senior of each group of full brothers will offer a cow. 764

Not only the immediate family of a dead man but also the fathers (or brothers) of his wives and the husbands of his sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing at his burial, and if he is buried at his 'father's' place then his 'father's' affinal relatives also are expected to bring cattle or cloths. When a married woman dies, her husband and her own 'father' are expected each to provide a cow or a bull. Occasionally other affines of her husband bring calves, but less usually. More cattle are killed for men than for women. For a young child nothing is killed. 764

The cattle are killed either by the dead man's 'father' or by his heir; if a woman has died, then by her husband. At a man's burial 768

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

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ever, insisted that it was performed whether there was a girl to send or not, but if several sisters were married to the same man it was carried out only for the eldest of them. 765
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We do this whether we are substituting another woman or not, but we do it only for the senior sister. There were three Sebas married to Mwaipopo, and when the two junior ones died we did not go to cut the bananas, but now the senior Seba has died, we do cut the bananas.

Mwaiselage explained that his brother-in-law would come to cut bananas when his senior wife, Lyandileko, died, whether she died before or after her junior sister who is her co-wife, but the brother would not cut bananas at the death of the junior sister. 765

MWAKWELEBEJA: We cut the banana grove again when all the children of those women, the kinswomen married to one man, are dead. That is, their mother's brother's son (*untani*) does it, for their mother's brother will be dead by then. It means the same thing: 'The kinship is finished.' They pay to say: 'No, Father, it still continues.'

A woman to replace the dead is asked for even though her husband has predeceased her. X, describing the ritual added: 587
765

And when my mother dies (if my father has died first) still her relatives, my *abipua*, come to cut the banana grove. I throw them a cloth crying: 'Not the bananas.' Also they bring me another woman. If they do not, I go to them and say: 'Give me another mother to look after me.' They give me a girl whom I give to a half-brother (as his wife). If there is no girl they give me a cow, saying: 'That's your mother.'

Ibaso and Mwaijamba explained:

If, when a woman has died, her people are poor, having no child to replace her, they say: 'We are sorry, but there is nothing at all here, this cow is for drawing water with.' And formerly they returned all the cattle later on; but now, since we have stopped claiming calves, we divide the cows. . . . But when there is a daughter and they give her to me, the husband, we give marriage cattle again. Kinship does not come to an end. [602]

To recapitulate, the main events of the ritual of death are the formal recognition of the heir (if the deceased was a married man); the burial of a flowering head of bananas and the rubbing in earth from the grave; washing; a ritual eating of bananas with certain seeds; sweeping out the mourning hut; circling the hearth and putting an old pot on the fire with various foods; the presentation of millet by relatives and friends, and a ritual grinding; a second 765
768

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

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new husband has not been sleeping with her], then at first, before she lies with him, we (her relatives) eat with her. But when the child leaves the breast and her husband begets another then she comes to perform the ritual. Otherwise we cannot eat with her. And so with a pregnant widow—at first we eat with her but when the child is born and has been weaned and her new husband begets another she comes to perform the ritual.

The new husband must send a bull or a sheep with his spear, and we who drink the beer divide the meat, saying: 'Thank you, you have nourished us.' Yesterday he sent 30s., and I, the doctor, got 1s. If it had been a bull I would have got some meat. The husband does not come himself, but he sends a friend to bring the woman. This friend does not eat or drink the medicine, but he drinks the beer without medicine and the cassava we cook. [In the ritual just completed] Mwasalemba provided three pots of beer—we drank one before and two after the ceremony. That was what the men were waiting for.

No, it never happens that one who has drunk the medicine of *ingotolo* falls sick of it afterwards, never.

The spear is taken and kept by the girl's brother at the command of her father, who says: 'Take this spear, your sister has brought it.' It is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of kinship, it is like the spear with which a girl was betrothed in the old days. At the betrothal the lover would stick the spear in the ground, the girl pulled it up and took it to her father, sticking it into the ground before him, and he, if he agreed, told her brother to take it up. And if there is any dispute later about cattle then the spear is proof of agreement. It has the same significance at betrothal and at the *ingotolo* ritual. Sometimes the heir has to bring cattle that have not yet been paid by the dead man. When the woman's brother takes the spear into the house at the *ingotolo* ritual, that means: 'Now you¹ have entered into the house—your house—so we bring you in.' And then she can go in.

The calling out of 'Thief' is a custom in the ritual, but it is like a song, it's not important. The firewood is shown to the woman and a bean and a grain of maize are put into a crack of the wood. That means that the ritual is complete.

No, there is no extra safety in coming to the ceremony; those who drink at home are equally protected!

iii. Evidence of other informants

CURRENT TALK: Some people have been told by those who have run mad, that they see a man who comes to them sometimes. When that man is with them then they lose the sense of what they are doing. The

¹ It was not clear from the context whether 'you' referred to groom or bride. The symbolism suggests the act of marriage but of this we have no direct evidence.

Nyakyusa
Selya, MulNgonde

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

105

The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the litter at the coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it is our blood (*Bo kutamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*). And if a girl runs off with a lover in the veld they mock her and say: 'Who has given you powdered medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relative, she has not got our blood. . . . The medicine is to create relationship (*shutamu*). Using it means that the bride is now of my lineage (*itukole*). You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down, as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my relative (*utukamu gwanga*).' [346] 789 581

Another informant (a pagan), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has come. She is now my relative (*utukamu gwanga*)."' [775]

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband proclaims the seniority of a wife. Washing with her own mother and her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. The girl washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relatives. 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives."' Kasitile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is my child, I begot her myself, she is my first-born."' Mwakionde, after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes, said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and grown up.' And if a brother does it we asked. 'It means: "You young man, you are her father." If they ever quarrel the brother says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed together in water."' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-up boys are going about. They want one who has not made love to girls.' 788 602

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is 602 585

Nyakyusa
Selya, Mul Ngonde

602
585 again an acknowledgment of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

585 The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the
833 officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she kneels to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the banana, but Kasitile and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

At the 'putting her in' (*akwagwa*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together bananas and *itipiti* medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They treat her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are treating her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ikimayila*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the banana nothing is said, it is only implied, but [847] at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children."

783 The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for
881 every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a cleansing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and
585 wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away. Mwakwelebeja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alemwike ubusungu*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwaihojo said: 'The shaving is to show that the *akwagwa* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *itipiti* medicine had been

Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 her mother-in-law covers her head with a red cloth 'for display'.
585 'We are rejoicing because our child has grown up,' and she too takes her on her shoulders and dances with her. When the 'husbands' come to dance the stamping dance: 'It too is a rejoicing. It shows I have married a wife now.' All through there is rejoicing over the fine food, and the celebration and feasting is primarily among the women. The culmination comes when the girl is publicly shown to be a virgin and the mothers can claim the bull crying in exultation: 'It's ours, it's ours.'

881 An interesting sidelight on the attitude of girls towards the ritual
585 came from a young man, a Christian, who was betrothed to a
184 pagan girl and had forbidden her to go through the ritual. He
795 said:

Once my wife, when she had reached puberty, asked me why I objected to her undergoing the puberty ritual. I said it was forbidden for us Christians to participate in it, and I asked her if she wished to do so. She said 'Yes', and I asked why. She said: 'When the ritual is performed for us we are famed. People tell each other that so-and-so's daughter has grown up and people from far away come to sing songs, so we become very well known. See, now I have grown up, but no one sees that I have done so. Only you know.' Then I said: 'We Christians also have the custom of celebrating growing up at the handing over of marriage-cattle to the father (*ukukwa*). We do not hand over cattle when girls are still small, so everyone sees that a girl has grown up when we do so.' She agreed and said: 'I, also, have seen a little of the handing over of cattle among Christians.'

In fact, the *ukukwa* is the occasion for a great feast among Christians to which many young men and girls come to sing and dance.

881 The giving of presents to the bride by her father and his con-
585 temporaries is interpreted as part of the rejoicing.

431 To give presents (*ukabonola*) is to rejoice. It's an occasion for display and rejoicing, because the girl has grown up. The father gives her a present because he rejoices that she has grown up. He says to her: 'Congratulations, you have grown up, you are going away to your husband, you are going away to gain a child!'

881 During the period of seclusion the girl's father is spoken of as
585 her father-in-law (*unkamwans*). She must *ukutula* (respect and
602 avoid) him:

Because he is her father who begot her. She thinks: 'I must respect

Nyakyusa

Selya, Mu Ngonde

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

III

my father-in-law, father.'¹ She says: 'I have grown up finally, I am a woman.' 'As I have grown up, I am a daughter-in-law (*unkamwana*).'⁸⁸¹ 'If a girl looks at her father (during the ritual) she is proud (*namatingo*).'⁵⁸⁵ 'She used to be beaten if she looked at her father's friends. She is proud if she does. Her mothers will beat her.' She also fears ridicule—'We *ukutula* because we laugh at one another'—and mystical sanctions. 'If she does not *ukutula* (her father) she gets thin and brown. Since she has grown up she must avoid people.' 'She would become light in colour if she did not *ukutula* during the ritual.' 'She will grow thin and her body will be brown instead of black. We think that ugly.'⁶⁰²

Mwandisi (the old blind chief), asked why a bride should *ukutula* her father, replied:

She avoids him and he gives her a gift to break the taboo. During puberty it is taboo. Kyala has created us so. Because if her father looks at her she grows thin, those below [i.e. the shades] are angry.

QUESTION: And those above?

MWANDISI: Yes! Do they not injure them? Do they not give those who throw out the litter a bull that they may eat?

Mwakionde (the doctor), asked the same question, replied:

It is because of the in-law relationship (*ubukamwana*). If I, the father, look at her she will grow thin and waste away, but at the beer we give her gifts of bark-cloth to break the taboo and say: 'You have come out (*usabile*). You have come out, my child. I am sorry about the fire, I am sorry.' Then she looks at us. She avoids me, the father, and my younger brothers and my fellows in the age-village who are all, according to our custom, her fathers. [60]

Ukutula of her mother-in-law (shielding her face with a mat or skin) was interpreted by Mwakionde in this way:

It is on account of the dignity of her mother-in-law who says: 'She is my child, see, she respects and avoids me, saying: "She bore my husband." I am her superior. She acknowledges my dignity. She is wise, she respects me, her mother.'

Everyone was agreed that 'the bull of puberty' (*ingambako jabu*-⁵⁸⁵ *sunga*) is both a sacrifice to the shades, who are asked to bless the girl and make her fertile, and a feast for the mothers and that, strictly, it is only brought if the girl is virgin. 'We throw the *ija* *mmage* meat in the banana grove and put a stone on top of it so that those below may eat, and we pray that the girl may bear a'⁸⁸¹

¹ Some aspects of father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoidance are discussed in *Good Company*, pp. 83-6.

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

129

blood of another lineage mingles with hers, but it has not reached her mother because they have not met. To drink water together from one calabash is to meet. Then the mother has diarrhoea because her body is not accustomed to the blood of another lineage. To have diarrhoea is to go bad, to expel (*ukusosya*) the filth. The *ilibuko* of the fowl is the body of the groom which mingles with the body of the girl's parents that they may be one blood with him. [753]

Thus, not only husband and wife, but also parents and son-in-law become one flesh. 602 ●
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As in Selya, a direct connection is made between the parents receiving a bull for the bride's virginity, and her bearing a child to her husband. Mwasalemba explained: 'Kyala together with the shades have made the girl grow up. If the girl runs off with her husband and I, the father, have not received cattle, then the earth is angry, the shades say: "We shall see if she will flourish there." Then the girl does not conceive, and the diviner says: "The shades are angry." The groom's people bring cattle, then I, the father, pray for my child and she conceives, her belly swells.'

vomit by tickling the back of my throat with a hen's feather, while I am standing under the fall with the water coming down on my head. The blood of him you have killed is in the waterfall. May it not come! May it all go out of the body! You vomit because it is there in the body. May it go out! Then a medicine is cooked and the legs of the slayer and his relatives are scalded with it. It is the medicine of twins: the twin medicine and the spearing medicine are one because they are a rejection of the blood. When people's legs have been splashed then we all shave; that is to drive away him whom we have killed.

But even after such treatment the kin of the slayer and the slain fear to eat together. 'We remain enemies. If we eat with them it makes us thin.'

Those who drink protective medicines are the agnatic kin of the slayer and the slain, their mothers' kin (*abipwa*) and their wives, but not their affines. 'Those who must be treated are wives, and blood relatives but not affines. Affines are of different blood, but wives are of your flesh.'

The spearing ritual is not a joint ritual in which a large group of kin participate; married men, even brothers, make their own arrangements for taking protective medicine.

We do not meet together with all our relatives, the descendants of one man, no, it is not like the twin ritual. We drink it each man with his wives and children in his house. If I have a married brother he also goes to a doctor to ask for medicines for himself. He seeks his own doctor, not the one to whom I went. We drink separately, we do not meet together when we drink.

Only if a daughter had been given in compensation for a murder (as sometimes happened) and later he who married her took marriage cattle to her father to establish kinship, then, our informants said, the two parties should drink the 'medicine of spearing' (*unkota gwa lukwego*) together.

(b) *Rotting the ropes*

A man who has been bound with ropes (*ingoje*), or has committed suicide by hanging,¹ or raided cattle and tethered them, is also

¹ What the incidence of suicide is among the Nyakyusa we do not know. The Rev. Merensky, one of the first Europeans to live in the area, speaks of it being 'not uncommon'. We recorded two cases: one of a man whose wife and children had died; the other a woman forced to leave her lover and marry against her will. X, a Christian whom we knew well, swore to his pagan elder brother that he would commit suicide if his brother insisted on the pagan practice of performing an autopsy on the body of their dead sister.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PARTICIPANTS

(a) *Categories of participants*

788 THE people who take part in rituals have been referred to
571 repeatedly and now it is possible to define who they are. They fall
602 into four categories: the principals, the minor actors, the congregation, and the officiants or priests. The principals are those who undergo the full ritual lest they go mad; they are always close kin, but what category of kin depends on the type of ritual and the status of the person for whom it is performed. After a death, those who *must* perform the ritual to drive away the shade are the children and grandchildren of the deceased—all of them, the widows and the heir, if a man has died, or, if it is a woman and a senior wife, the widower and her related co-wife if she has one.¹ A man does not perform the ritual for a junior wife or one he has inherited. Children of a related co-wife are treated, for the purposes of ritual, as her own children, and all must undergo the ritual, but only some of the children of other co-wives are selected to perform it. When a man dies the children of the heir perform it, but only some of the children of his other brothers and half-brothers. 'We choose some and leave the others until their own father dies.' The genealogy given on p. 273 to show who performed the ritual on a particular occasion illustrates this. A mother (unless she has been divorced) performs the ritual for all her own children, and the children of a sister who is a co-wife. A divorced woman may come to mourn her dead child at her former husband's homestead but she takes no part in the ritual. 'I, the husband, perform the ritual alone; the woman comes to weep and returns to her new husband. I, the husband, say: "The blood is mine; that bag was bought (*alyokigwa*) with cattle; she was divorced and bought with cattle again.'" A man performs the ritual for a son and daughter of each wife, and grandparents perform it for some, but not all, grandchildren.

¹ Probably also the younger sister or brother's daughter who replaces her as a wife, but we have no conclusive evidence on this point.

Certain siblings perform the ritual, but not all of them. We have referred already to the heir, who is commonly a dead man's younger brother, and who must perform it whether he is a full brother or half-brother, and to a woman's related co-wife who may be either a younger sister or a brother's daughter. The brother or sister 'who followed at the mother's breast', i.e. the sibling immediately younger, must always perform it. Nyakyusa find it very difficult to formulate the rules—there were lively arguments between well-informed people when the question was posed—but these principles emerge from a study of those who actually participated in eight funeral rituals. 788 593

Since the funeral ritual is directed to the shades, men can only perform it in the homesteads of their agnatic kinsmen, or of their maternal grandfather or his heir: they can never perform it at the homestead of affines (*kubuko*) for there they are not kinsmen (*abakamu*) but in-laws (*abako*). Hence a husband performs the ritual for his senior wife at his own homestead and her father (or his heir) at his. 'According to custom "the husbands" (*abalume*) perform the ritual, then, when they have done so, she whom we have put in place of the dead comes to us and says: "Fathers, we have performed the ritual, perform it yourselves."' We never saw a ritual of farewell to a dead woman at her father's house but believe it to be a modified form of the ritual performed at her husband's. 764 602

Because of the rules of avoidance, a father-in-law and daughter-in-law cannot, together, go through a ritual which involves the close proximity of the principals. When, therefore, a man performs the death ritual for a son or son's child, he performs it at his own home, and the daughter-in-law concerned does so at her husband's homestead. The widow or parents must begin, and the father or grandparents follow. Thus when Mwandisi's son's son died, the parents of the child first performed the ritual at their home and Mwandisi and his wife then followed at theirs. But in a twin ritual, where participants can be secluded, father-in-law and daughter-in-law may attend the same performance. 606 764

A woman can perform a ritual either at her father's or her husband's (as well as at her mother's father's) and she may even perform it according to two different forms, following that of her father's lineage when she is visiting him, and that of her husband's lineage when she is performing it at his homestead. 788 593

It is possible that, on the death of a man, his sisters' children 764 602

764 sometimes perform the ritual, but we lack conclusive evidence.

- 602 One case in which a sister's daughter of the deceased man performed the ritual was recorded, but at other funerals girls in the same relationship did not. Kakune, the doctor, asserted that a boy would perform the ritual for his mother's brother for 'he is mother, the brother of mother (*jo juba ulilumbu gwa juba*)', but in a number of cases we observed women performing the rituals for their brothers though their sons did not. A man's children may possibly perform the ritual for his sister but we traced no case of their doing so.

768 Those who drink the ritual beer when a widow returns to her
602 father's house after her union with the heir are her father and the men of his lineage—brothers, half-brothers, sons, and some of his brother's sons; the wives and children of these; and daughters of the lineage, her own sisters and half-sisters, and sisters of her father, but *not* the husbands or children of daughters of the lineage. At one *ingotolo* ritual we attended there were present eleven men of the lineage, eighteen daughters, and thirty-two wives, as well as numerous children (cf. genealogy, Table (c)).

764 When a woman has died those who come to cut the banana
593 grove and give medicated meat to her children are the *abipwa*—her brother (or his heir) and his wives.

764 The principals at a death ritual, then, are children and grand-
602 children, parents and grandparents, spouses, and certain siblings of the deceased, together with some of their children. If a woman dies, or a widow is inherited, her agnatic kin and their wives are concerned as well.

845 The group which takes protective medicine after an abnormal
602 birth is larger. All the wives and children and grandchildren of the father of twins must come, his full siblings with their children and grandchildren, and the wives of his brothers, but not the husbands of his sisters; some of his half-brothers, with wives and children, some of the children of his father's brothers' sons (but not of father's brothers' daughters) and of his father's sisters' sons. On the mother's side her father, or his heirs, must take part with his wives and children, and her sisters. At the ritual for Mwakobela and his wife, previously described, we counted 136 relatives taking part, of which 24 were men, 19 boys, 33 women, 12 girls, and 35 babies (cf. genealogy, Table (a)).

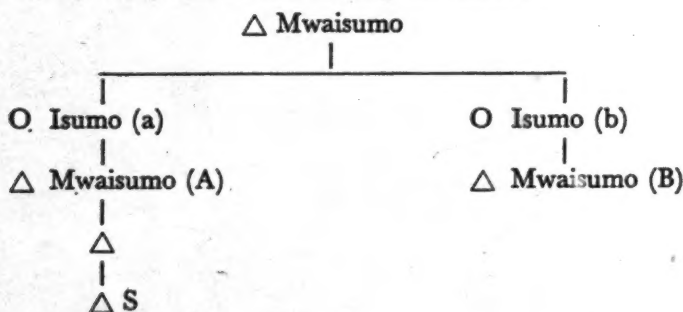
845 When the mother of twins took the *ilibalaga* back to her 'father',
602 her brother (heir to her father), with his wives and children, her

THE PARTICIPANTS

193

sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the sister immediately younger than herself, took part. 845 602 ●

At the ritual of spearing, the principals are the children and grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their mother's kin (*abipwa*) and their wives. We were not able to watch any case of treatment against *ulukwego* and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual, but we traced one case in which a minor chief, Mwaisumo (B.), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwaisumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives. 783 602 682



[601]

At a ritual to 'rot the ropes' those concerned are the descendants of the one who has been bound and their wives, siblings and siblings' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 3 sons, 5 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters. 783 602

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was performed at the home of the senior brother (heir to his father) of the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's sons; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived next door) could not take the medicine at his in-law's house, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kinsfolk. 789 602 754

In the simple ritual of prayer to the shades the senior kinsman who offers the prayer and blows out water acts alone but, if there

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782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or
beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the
shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with
one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not
be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty-marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her
eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at
home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and
infant.

764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or
village neighbours.¹ They wash after the burial and are rewarded
with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines
(*abako*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased
or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth.
When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother,
kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle.
Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neigh-
bours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and
small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for
making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
845 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also
splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in
giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers
and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his
sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands.
They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
788 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

¹ In Ngonde they are *abatani*, cross-cousins.

585 between' accompanies 'the mothers-in-law' when they go to induct or instruct the bride, and the wife of her father's 'go-between' is one of the group of mothers which takes the bride to her husband. The duties of a 'go-between' do not end at marriage: the [851] groom's 'go-between' is responsible for taking to the bride's people the hen to announce the birth of the first child, and, among the Lugulu, the 'go-between' of the father is master of ceremonies at the ritual of vituperation.

789 The ideas that emerge from this analysis are, that in the *protective* rituals—after death, twin birth, spearing, binding with ropes, and death from sorcery—the parents, children, grandchildren, and some siblings, and siblings' children of the person primarily affected undergo the ritual. Links through females as well as males are recognized—daughters' children as well as sons' children attend—but they are not traced so far, and a brother's or half-brother's children attend far more often than a sister's children. Moreover, children of an unrelated co-wife perform the death ritual for a woman rather than her sister's children.

593 Wives always attend rituals in which their husbands are concerned—indeed, they often come with their children when their husbands stay away—but when the wife is concerned as a sister or daughter, her husband never accompanies her.

593 The closest relatives, such as own children, children of the heir 602 or of a related co-wife, and proximate full siblings, must *all* participate, but the more distant relatives select representatives.

602 The range of relations concerned varies with the particular ritual—it is widest in the twin ritual and narrowest for an ordinary birth—and is also modified by proximity, for relatives who live near come when those in the same category living twenty miles away do not.

Affines (*abako*) never perform a ritual together even when they are next-door neighbours and close friends, but *abako* in one generation are *abipwa* (mother's kin) in the next, and a man and his *abipwa* can participate together, as in the protection against sorcery described. More often, however, the members of each lineage act separately.

602 Our Nyakyusa informants distinguished the officiants—*abanyago* 621 —from those undergoing a ritual but they did not make distinctions of the sort attempted here between principals and kin who 613 do not undergo the ritual. The distinctions they drew were between kinsmen and neighbours and between lineages. At a death

THE PARTICIPANTS

197

ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abandu itolo* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakikolo* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abako* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abipwa*). These categories have different functions.

(b) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals¹ and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

¹ There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

431 between the groom's lineage and that of the bride during the puberty-marriage ritual.

431 Within a lineage, also, there is some circulation of property. A
613 young man is provided with marriage-cattle by his father, or father's heir; a father kills a cow at his son's funeral, a son does likewise for his father; and if a son offends his father he begs pardon with a gift. A daughter is given a gift by her father at the close of the puberty ritual, and he or his heir kills a cow at her funeral.

431 Village neighbours are closely identified with the father, and
621 feast on the bull of puberty and the offering provided by an erring son, and give gifts to a daughter when she reaches maturity.

431 Kinsmen and neighbours are expected to help provide food, and firewood on which to cook it, for the guests at a funeral or marriage or at a twin-birth ritual. On the first day of a funeral guests are fed on food provided by the bereaved household, on the following day on that provided by their kinsmen, and on the third day on that provided by the village neighbours. Before the marriage-cattle are brought for his daughter, a man asks his kinsmen and immediate neighbours to help him cook for 'the husbands'—not to ask for such help is unfriendly. Kinsmen and neighbours also bring gifts of millet at a funeral and after an abnormal birth, which is used for brewing the ritual beer.

(d) The symbolism of participation and exchange

431 What is implied by undergoing a ritual or offering gifts? Participation in a ritual implies close kinship. We see, in the rituals performed after death, or spearing, or binding with ropes, the unity of the group composed of parents, children, grandparents, and siblings; the acknowledgement of a closer link between some siblings than between others; a recognition that wives are of 'one blood' with their husbands; and a separation between kinsmen and affines who are of another blood. In the twin ritual the limits of recognized kinship are expressed by participation and in the death ritual they are expressed by attendance. Observance of the taboo of avoidance, like attendance at rituals, is taken as evidence of kinship.

554 The difference in the status of senior and junior wives, and of
602 eldest and junior daughters and sons, also appears in the rituals at puberty and marriage and at death. The unity between living and dead agnatic kin and, in a lesser degree, mother's kin, is ex-

pressed again and again in the pagan rituals. The Christian withdrawal from them implies a partial break with the closed circle of kin, a movement from the nexus of kinship to that of association, from the kinship group to the congregation of believers.

The passage of cattle at marriage implies first the establishment of a bond of kinship with the wife for whom they are given. 'Kinship is cattle' (*ubukamu syo ngombe*) and a woman for whom cattle have not been given is never kin (*unkamu*) to her husband.

The passage of marriage-cattle determines the legal position of the children borne by the woman for whom they have been given. Whoever has given the cattle controls the children; and, if no cattle have passed, the girl's father (or brother) can claim them. If the woman for whom cattle have been given leaves the lineage which gave them, the cattle (traditionally all of them, together with their progeny) must then be returned, even though her original husband is dead; and when she dies she should be replaced. Kinship between lineages once linked by marriage should ideally be permanent, and the link is reasserted in the ritual in which, when a woman dies, her brother goes to cut down the bananas at her husband's homestead and to seize her children, and has to be persuaded with a gift to desist. The identification made between women and cattle exchanged is suggested in the phrase conventionally used when no girl is available to take the place of a dead wife and a cow is offered in her place 'for drawing water with':

The killing of cattle at a funeral, and the burial of cloths and other goods, is an expression of the idea that the dead take wealth with them. When a man requires cattle to pay compensation for some wrong committed and has not sufficient stock to do so, he turns for help to his affines, his sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, and so, when he dies, and is in need of cattle, it is felt appropriate that they should help him.

But the gifts offered at rituals have many other implications. Men take cattle and cloths to a funeral '*ukuti ndaga*'—to express sympathy—and gifts are given to a bride also '*ukuti ndaga*', which then implies congratulation rather than condolence. And gifts are used when begging pardon—a son who has sinned against his father first sends a hen and later offers a bull; and a daughter-in-law who has looked at her father-in-law or sworn at her mother-in-law must offer beer or a bull. Lastly, they are used in lifting a ban, putting an end to an avoidance. When a girl's father and his

kijenja, *ko bikwiputa*, the sacred place of the fathers is the banana grove, there they pray.' 775

The virility of a lineage is symbolized by the *ikipiki* medicine, interpreted as 'our blood' or 'semen'. With it mourners, menstruating girls, bride and groom, the new-born babies and their mothers are treated. To provide it or use it is to acknowledge agnatic kinship: husband and wife wash with it together in acknowledgement that the wife is now 'one blood' with her husband; the grandmother gives it to her son's child in acknowledgement of its legitimacy; in the death rituals the mourners eat food with it acknowledging their kinship with the shade. To belong to a lineage is to be protected practically and spiritually, and the *ikipiki* medicine is held to protect those who are 'empty' and weak—the 'hollow men'—from those who are 'heavy' with real semen or medicines. 796 602 789

The shade, *unsyuka*,¹ 'he who is risen from the dead', may be interpreted as the principle of life, but at the same time he is 'the one beneath', *ugwa pasi*, filthy, and fearful. What men worship is life; what they fear is death, corruption; and for the pagan Nyakyusa, as for the Christian,² the two are inextricably mingled. *Imindu* (sing. *ilindu*) means dirt, dust, rubbish, the litter of the seclusion hut, and also the shade. When '*mindu*' is cited as the cause of some disease it is the shades (as things rather than persons) which are meant: 'dust to dust' is an image of pagan as of Christian theology. We have spoken of the Nyakyusa disgust for filth (*ubunyali*), which is associated with a corpse, menstruation, childbirth, intercourse, faeces, and all these are identified in some fashion with the shade. Faeces 'go below to the land of the shades'. The hair of a corpse is the shade's, the hair of a girl at puberty is 'the filth of her menstrual blood'. In all the rituals the filth is buried, shaved off, burnt, washed away, and at the death ritual 'he who is risen' is brought 'to warm himself' at the family hearth, but yet he dwells in the earth and is 'dirty'. 775 783

The conception of impurity, uncleanness, associated with physiological functions of coition, excretion, menstruation, childbirth and death is, as we have already suggested, a very widespread one. 783

¹ *Ukunyuka*: to rise from the dead. For the noun the personal class is most commonly used, but some of the old men always spoke of *iminyuka* rather than *abayuka*. A young man, commenting on this, explained: 'The shades are not people like us, but *imindu*', i.e. they are things—dust—not persons.

² 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' John xii, 24.

THE NYAKYUSA CONCEPTION OF REALITY

217

find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-⁵⁷⁸
village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are⁷⁷⁵
angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a
runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either
she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-
cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and
accepted by her father.

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and⁵⁹³
in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the⁶⁸⁸
heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had.
Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling
with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-
cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of
the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead,
neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when
she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may
become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has be-
gotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may
fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he
does not care for me."' The mystical power of a senior relative is⁶⁰²
linked directly with his obligation to give gifts:⁴³¹

My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given
marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him
cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior
(*mbala gwangu*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair divi-⁵⁹⁵
sion of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is⁷⁷⁵
thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from⁵⁷⁸
the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so⁸²⁵
do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife.
Mwakwelebeja explained that:

If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes
sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is
spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do
not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently⁶⁸⁶
mentioned.

It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father
will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RITUALS OF KINSHIP 225

women, daughters of the lineage precede wives. Seniority, of course, does not depend solely on age, and we once saw a little boy precede his father in the performance of a ritual for his grandmother, with whose generation he was identified. The relative status of husband and wife is expressed in the taboo on a woman 'overstepping' her husband physically or metaphorically, and 'overstepping' is symbolized (oddly to a Christian) by the sign of a cross. The precedence of the chief wife is very marked. In commoner families she alone washes with her husband using the *ikipiki* medicine, and he performs the death ritual for her only. A chief may do this for two wives. In Selya a father washes in the puberty ritual with his senior daughter, and among the Kukwe a woman washes with her daughter or eldest son's first wife. 'To wash is to admit that I have lived, and borne a child, and grown up.'

All the rituals celebrate a change in status, and danger lies in not recognizing or admitting the change, in clinging to the past. This is most obvious in the death ritual, which is directed to the separation of the living and the dead. The mourners have the corpse 'on their bodies', they may not separate themselves from him by washing till the appropriate moment, and they share their food and *ikipiki* medicine with the shade, thereby recognizing him as a kinsman; but in due course they drive him off: 'You were our kinsman before but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' 'You are no relative of ours.' 'We are not corpses.' And at the same time they bring him back transformed, as a beneficent spirit in the home. The pattern is a common one in Bantu Africa: the Nyakyusa peculiarity is (1) the speed with which the transformation is achieved (commonly the 'bringing back' of the spirit is delayed a year, whereas the Nyakyusa may delay only a month); and (2) the close correspondence between the change in status of the dead and the change in status of the older generation, who 'move aside' at the 'coming out'. Each generation has its day and must give place to the next.

All through the rituals the dominance of the agnatic lineage is evident, but it does not exclude the recognition of kinship in the female line. Daughters' children *must* perform the ritual at death, twin birth, spearing, and binding with ropes, for their grandparents, while some sisters' children, and father's sisters' sons, may do so also. What is clear from the genealogies is that kinship links in the female line are not traced as far as in the male line and,

613 though wives are assimilated to their husbands' lineages for ritual
602 purposes, men play no part in the rituals of their wives' lineages.

613 The second fundamental principle expressed in the rituals of
577 kinship is that a moral law holds within the lineage. Senior kinsmen, living and dead, have a mystical power over their juniors, but their anger is dangerous only if it is just. They cannot mutter irresponsibly. Kinsmen are 'members of one another' in the sense that the life and death of one affect the others. The sins of a father are visited on his children, his juniors in the lineage (though a woman's sins affect only her own husband and children), and the very fact of kinship makes a mystical bond between agnatic kin, descendants of a common great-grandfather, and a man and his daughters or sister's children. The moral law is thought to operate also within the age-village, where the just are protected and the evil punished by 'the breath of men'; but within both lineage and village irresponsible and malicious injury by witches or sorcerers is possible.

777 When misfortune occurs the sufferer, and his kinsmen and
787 neighbours, seek an explanation in conflicts and ritual omissions, and interpret the misfortune in terms of these, putting the possible alternatives before the oracle. Thus the danger of conflict with kinsmen and neighbours, and of neglect of ritual, is constantly before men's minds. In practice, there is a strong tendency to push the blame for misfortune outside the lineage of living and dead on to the neighbours.

000 (b) *The celebration of rituals and maintenance of the structure*

In any society the practical, intellectual, and emotional aspects are mutually dependent; the practical organization is dependent upon, and at the same time supports, an intellectual system—certain cosmological ideas—and attitudes. It has been argued very cogently that these ideas and attitudes are maintained by their expression in myth and rite¹ but little evidence for this has been published. Can objective evidence be collected? The anthropologist cannot look into men's minds; he is not concerned with personal religion—with the varieties of religious experience. Can he observe any effect of participation in ritual upon the behaviour of groups and categories of people? It must be admitted that our evidence here is thin.

¹ A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (1922), pp. 296 ff.; *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 157 ff.

764 Mpogo began to admonish the wives. This went on for two hours or more. I heard one of the sisters remark: 'The wives tremble now, their husband has died, their Kyala has died.' There was a great noise. Mpogo said to me: 'Our sisters are men, those our wives have married. It is the custom to admonish the wives because our sisters have been angry.' 'And at a twin ritual?' 'Yes, then also.'

764 I was told later: 'Mpogo's sisters punished all their sisters-in-law because when they had gone to their brothers the sisters-in-law did not receive them well, they were stingy to them with food. One said: "I went to my brother's home. When I was approaching I passed through a sweet potato garden; I took a potato without fearing because I said to myself: 'It's the garden of my mother.' When I arrived with the one sweet potato I had dug up she said: 'Who are you with a sweet potato?' And she began to shout, saying: 'Whose is it? You do not listen.' My body began to shrink and I said to myself: 'Ha! Why does she not come to look closely? She says a thief comes by day.' And I sat down." And so they went on.'

764 While this continued the principals were all given ointment (*inyumba*) by the officiant and smeared themselves. 'This is the first time they've done so since the death.' Then at the other door of the hut all the principals were collected 'to see the litter (*utakata ulufumba*)'. They watched while the officiant sat inside the door, took some dry banana leaves handed to her, and sprinkled powder on them in the form of a cross. Then she went out of the door holding the leaves and rubbed them lightly on the ground in the form of a cross, and put them outside to be thrown away.

At last the admonitions of the brothers' wives stopped.

Then came the putting of food into the pot. The officiant held an old pot in her hand and circled round the hearth-bricks with it while her assistant dropped in food and all the women sang '*Ilimevusa*'. The food was transferred to another pot and put on the fire. The officiant then touched the hearth-bricks with different parts of her body, or made gestures as if to do so, while she and they said: 'The foot is also put on the fire,' and so on. For all the parts the prefix *aa* was used, implying 'his'. The officiant also said, stamping: 'You pass by me, I your wife, your friend.'

Then came a symbolic pouring out of millet into a basket. The gifts of millet were not available, so a little, provided by the family, was used symbolically. Two small winnowing baskets were emptied into a large grain basket by the officiant, while another woman said names—of relatives for the first basket and of neighbours for a second: 'So-and-so and So-and-so has brought millet'—ending up with 'all' in each case. 'This,' they said, 'is a symbol (*ikimeyisile*), we shall each bring our gift of millet later.'

Four stems of bananas had been brought and were now divided up—

Nyakyusa

to

PEOPLES OF THE LAKE NYASA REGION

167

of the new area. Their culture differs from that of the indigenous tribes, so that they remain largely unassimilated. The cause of the exodus is partly shortage of land;² the Nyakyusa are skilled cultivators; the active soil-conservation campaign promoted by the Agricultural Department in Rumonge district involved farmers in additional effort, so that land in Mbeys was attractive in so far as the soil conservation scheme only started there two years later. The main motive, however, was to shorten the transport haul between the farmer and the market at Lopa. The demand for supplies of beans and grain from Rumonge district was decreasing even before the 1939 war, partly because production on the goldfields was declining, and partly because the produce of Mbeys district was increasing (largely through the work of the immigrant Nyakyusa farmers). The main problems for the administration arising from the Nyakyusa immigration into Mbeys district is the lack of control by the Native Authorities and congestion in the river valleys. The Sifwa, who vacated the valleys of the Nsofe and Mbalali rivers after their wars with the Sanga, retreated into the hills before the flood of Nyakyusa immigrants, who now populate the valleys almost exclusively with their own compact endogenous groups.³

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

KINSHIP AND LOCAL GROUPING

62!

(The following section is compiled from information applying equally to Nyakyusa and Ngondo.)

561

The distinctive feature of the social organisation is the system of age-villages. An age-village consists of a male age-group with wives of any age and children. When a man dies his heir may come to live in his village, and strangers applying for land are never refused on grounds of age, but the original constitution of the village is based on the principle of identity of age. Up to the age of ten years the small boys herd cattle in groups. Then they start to hoe for their fathers, and leave their fathers' houses to go to sleep with friends. After two or three years they build for themselves in an age-village of young men. They continue to hoe the fields and eat the food of their mothers until marriage, after which they hoe mainly for themselves, on land adjacent to their new huts.⁴

● 602

If a young man, instead of hoeing, goes out to work, he is expected to bring back tax-money for his father. By his service he earns the right to be given cattle for marriage. A young man whose father is poor in cattle will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, brother of his father or mother, and hoe regularly for him, eventually receiving from him a large portion of his marriage cattle.⁵ Sons-in-law are expected to bring their friends now and again to hoe for their father-in-law, who will afterwards entertain the workers.⁶

[61]

Descent and inheritance are patrilineal, but there are no clans, and no descent group with a common name and definite membership.⁷ The sons of a group of effective kinsmen are not all themselves effective kinsmen, and in the third generation the bonds of kinship may often have been forgotten. Cattle exchanges signify the most

² Wilson, 2, 1938, p. 7.
³ Wilson, 1, 1938, p. 78.
⁴ Ibid., p. 28.

⁵ Ibid., 1930.
⁶ Ibid., p. 29.
⁷ Ibid., 2, 1938, p. 267; 4, 1939, p. 2.

NORTH NYASA REGION

21

602 Important relationships of kinship and affinity. Marriage cattle are not kept by the bride's father, but are distributed by him among his brothers for their marriages, and among his own brothers and half-brothers, who in turn give him cattle when their own daughters marry.

556 Half-brothers do not generally exchange cattle, but unless they do so there are no strong bonds of kinship between them. A polygynist usually creates the relationship of 'milking each other's cows', between his senior son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers by his other wives. He gives some of the marriage cows received for a daughter to one of her half-brothers, the latter being placed under an obligation to return the cows to the girl's eldest full brother some day from the marriage cattle of a sister or daughter of his own. The exchange once begun usually continues as sisters and daughters marry, and only lapses in the third generation, unless the principals quarrel and take legal action for 'separation'. Then a balance is drawn up of the cows exchanged from the beginning of the relationship, and the kinship is broken. The two then 'separated' have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

602 428 Half-brothers may be linked by blood if their mothers are close kin; they may also be linked by cattle exchanges. The laws of inheritance make the full brothers of a man his first heirs, then his half-brothers linked by blood, then those linked by cattle have precedence over other half-brothers.¹

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother is expressed in terms of the passage of cattle. As the mother's brother married with the mother's cattle, her eldest son has the right to make free with his property in his lifetime, the right to receive one cow to set up a herd of his own, and a residuary right of inheritance; if the mother's brother dies without heir, her son can claim the particular wife obtained with and the particular property of the cattle given for his own mother.

606 There is a strict custom of father and daughter-in-law avoidance. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father, on pain of death through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours. The prohibition is extended from her own father-in-law to all his classificatory brothers, and is the basis of the age-village system.² A man must also avoid his mother-in-law, but this prohibition is relaxed after the birth of a child.³ The affinal relationship is also expressed by the obligation of a man to bring a cow to the funeral of his wife's father or brother, and to give one at the death of his own son-in-law. The former may count as part of his marriage payments in case of a claim for refund.⁴

601 The main kinship terms are as follows:

Ndama = brother-in-law or sister-in-law; used by a man for all husbands of his 'sisters', all 'brothers' of his wives, and for the son of his wife's brother, since he has a right to marry that man's sister; by a woman for all wives of her 'brothers' and all 'sisters' of her husband.

Nkhye = parent-in-law or child-in-law; used for the husband of a daughter, or for the parent of a wife or husband (a daughter-in-law is called by the special name of *Nkumama*). The wife of the wife's brother is called *Nkhye*, as she is the mother of a potential wife, and of a brother-in-law.

¹ Wilson, *l. cit.*, p. 212; *l. cit.*, p. 2.

² *Ibid.*, *l. cit.*, pp. 217-8; Blackman, *op. cit.*, pp. 41 and 106.

³ Blackman, *l. cit.*, p. 216.

⁴ Wilson, *l. cit.*

90 PEOPLES OF THE LAKE NYASA REGION
Burial

744 The death of any ordinary commoner and those of less important great commoners were announced to their local chiefs. On the death of a chief or noble or of a prominent great commoner, a hen was sent to the Kyungu to announce the death, and he returned one of the cloths obtained from the Arabs. If a prominent commoner or great commoner died, the great chief got a hen and sent a cloth. The funeral of the Kyungu was actively carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.¹

Attendance at ceremonies is a constituent factor of kinship and affinity. Attendance at burial is obligatory for members of the same village. Messages are sent to all the fathers-in-law and all the sons-in-law of the dead man, and of the senior kinsman who buries him, to all the dead man's full and half-brothers, to the husbands of his sisters, to any classificatory brothers with whom he has exchanged cows, to his mother's father, or brother, and to full and half-brothers of his father, and to his sons. These, with their wives and older children, are obliged to come. A chief normally goes to all burials in his childhood (excepting those of very young children), and a special part of the burial meat is given to him.

The ceremonies last about a month, starting with the burial ceremonies of three or four days. Any contact with the dead body is considered to be magically dangerous, and to require special purification. A few personal possessions are buried with the body. The funeral rites are believed to enable a man to join his ancestors. To decide the cause of death by studying the condition of the intestines, a post-mortem examination was formerly always made, the diagnosis afterwards being checked by the diviner. The ceremonies end with war dances (now become rather dances of sexual display), and with the killing of cattle to feed the mourners and honour the dead.

At all except the poorest burials, one or more head of cattle is killed. Not only the immediate family, but also the fathers of the dead man's wives and the husbands of his full-sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing, and if he is buried at his father's place, the father's affinal relations are expected to bring cows. More cows are killed for a man than for a woman, but her husband and father are both supposed to provide a cow for her burial. The heir, when the inheritance is settled, should kill the beasts, and thereby establish his claim if doubt arises later. Many relatives and friends bring cloths, some of which are buried with the dead; others are kept by his family. The beasts given of the dead are in part destroyed. A month after the funeral there is a commemorative beer feast and some beer is taken to the grave as an offering. After mourning all relatives and friends of the dead shave their heads.²

Utani³

744 602 According to Marwa, the Nyakyusa can cite three or more tribes having utani alliances with them. They also have utani relations between clans and between individuals. When a burial takes place, every utani within reach is under at least as strong an obligation as any relative to attend the funeral and to contribute to the expenses.⁴

¹ Wilson, 2, 1929, p. 66. According to Dr. Kari-Cross, 1952, p. 184, the Nyande used to bury people alive with the Kyungu.

² Macdonald, 1901, pp. 202-203; Wilson, 2, 1929; Johnston, 1927, pp. 423-5.

³ Marwa, 1921, pp. 2-6.

⁴ [A type of jukung relationship. - Analyst]

768 all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance
587 and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.³ Inherited wives have the
[42] same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes
is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

737 And a married man often supports an old woman⁴—a mother, mother-
in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of
hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on
her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

241 The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members,
476 other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually
invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing
two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the
work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women
friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping
of her crops and then she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in
the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married
woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a
month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

241 But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to
464 decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time
except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households
young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month
in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment
in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their
fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before
them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to
any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where
ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable
profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulapaku*).

241 Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When
592 a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of
602 father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the
606 marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by
his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to
bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and
they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the
marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are enter-
tained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

³ And any kinwoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

Further, if a young man's own father is poor in cattle, he will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, a brother of his father or of his mother, and hoe regularly for him. This is far more paying than hiring himself out to a mere neighbour, for he thereby places his rich kinsman *in loco parentis* and eventually gets from him a substantial proportion of his marriage cattle. 464 602

6. INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN RELATION TO VILLAGE GROUP AND CHIEF

Land is not owned in any absolute sense either by the man and his household who live on and cultivate it, or by the village group, or by the chief, but by all of them together. Land tenure among the Nyakyusa is a coherent system of rights in which the chief as overlord, the age-village under the leadership of its great-commoner, the individual male holder, his wives and children all participate. In this the Nyakyusa are in no way peculiar, for "absolute ownership" of land is a fiction nowhere realized; even in Western Europe the use of land is hedged by state and municipal regulations while the security of every owner's tenure is dependent upon political conditions which are not necessarily permanent. Everywhere, whether in civilized or in primitive society, the holding of land is "communal" in the sense that the individual's rights are dependent upon his social relationships, upon his membership of some group with a definite cultural idiom and social organization of its own; everywhere the holding of land is "individual" in the sense that particular people have, at any one moment, definite rights to participate in the use and to share the produce of particular pieces of ground. 423

There is however at the present time a difference of type between the land-tenure systems of Western Europe and those of the Central African tribes. Rapidly though these latter groups are being integrated with the world-wide organization of modern civilization, the process is not yet complete; and these systems of land-tenure still have some characteristics of the old primitive state wherein small and isolated groups were worlds unto themselves. For in some respects they are still isolated. The Nyakyusa, for example, are 400 miles from the nearest railway and, with the exception of a few small missions and plantations, they remain in occupation of all that traditional tribal land. Now in small and isolated social groups personal relationships necessarily dominate the holding of land for there are few or no impersonal relationships within their society at all. In the land-tenure systems of the vast social organizations of civilized society, on the other hand, impersonal relationship necessarily play an important part, though the precise legal emphasis which is laid 600

Burier of men!—Great Father! : Great Father!—O Mpets!¹—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa²—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala!¹—Great Father! Great Father!—O Striker and Stabber!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mwenende!²—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpolombasaambo!²—Great Father! Great Father!—Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!" The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungu.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the very oldest fled from his approach: "In former times we commoners never looked on the face of the Kyungu, we feared him far too much. When he journeyed through Ngonde we all used to flee from him, men, women and children; only the very oldest stayed to watch him as he came; and they would fall down and clap their hands in grateful worship."

Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—"The country is on the move"—"The great hill is moving"—"The mystery is coming." While it was taboo both for the old men who then stayed to see him and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu, never the ordinary "how-do-you-do?" From the nobles and great chiefs men did not flee; but the great chiefs, at least, were greeted by falling down and handclapping, not in the ordinary way.

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

On the other hand the various gifts of the Kyungu to his subjects were, in their ceremonial aspect, an expression of personal relationship to them, of paternal interest in them; and so also the tribute which they brought to him was, in its ceremonial aspect, an expression of filial respect. As in all primitive groups personal rather than impersonal relationships were dominant in the old Ngonde. The Kyungu was

¹ Names of early Kyungu.

² Aushic words which I do not understand.

643 "the father of all." All the chiefs were his kinsmen, many of the nobles
 602 were related to him by marriage, most of them were personally acquainted
 with him; and these facts were fundamental in the old constitution of
 Ngonde.

602 And so also the great chiefs and their subordinates, and the local
 764 rulers and their subjects were united by personal bonds which were given
 431 frequent ceremonial expression. At every funeral,¹ in particular, whether
 of chief, noble or commoner, ceremonial gifts of meat, beer, ordinary
 food, and other gifts also were made along the lines of the political
 hierarchy.

764 On the death of a chief, a noble or any commoner who had, during
 431 his life, had many personal dealings with Mbande, a hen was sent to the
 [765] Kyungu to announce the death, and the Kyungu then returned one of
 the imported cloths. When other prominent commoners or great-
 commoners died a hen was sent to the great chief of the area, who also
 returned an imported cloth. The deaths of ordinary commoners and
 less prominent great-commoners were announced only to the local
 ruler (chief or noble) without the gift of a hen, and no cloth was
 returned.

Similarly when cattle were killed at the funeral of any great-
 commoner or commoner a special portion of the meat of one beast (the
 breast and ribs) was always given to the local ruler.² In the case of a
 prominent commoner or great-commoner, however, a similar portion
 might be given to the great-chief as well. "Such an action was taken on
 the initiative of the family concerned, the great-chief never claimed it as
 of right." But if he himself came to the funeral it was normally done.
 The local rulers themselves, with their wives, attended the funerals of
 their subjects, and their wives brought food with them, to assist the
 family in its entertainment of the neighbours. And, finally, at the death
 of a local ruler or of one of his family, his subjects attended the funeral,
 bringing gifts of food.³

8. THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE COMPLETED (1875-1937)

070 We have now finished our systematic analysis of the constitution of
 Ngonde as it was before the coming of the Europeans. We have had to
 rely largely on oral tradition and that by itself is always in some degree
 suspect. Nevertheless the richness and coherence of what is remembered
 to-day, together with the observable continuity of modern institutions

¹ This account excludes the funeral of the Kyungu, which was secretly carried
 out by the nobles of Ngonde.

² This was certainly so in the chiefdom, evidence for the fact is here lacking.

³ Vide Wilson "Nyanjira Ceremonies of Burial."

MWIKO is very nearly a translation of the word *tabu*, and may be used either of things or of forbidden degrees of relationship. 601

3. The following points are noteworthy:—

- (1) The wife of a "brother," whether older or younger, uterine or not, is called by the same term (*nkasi*) as a wife. I am informed that sexual intercourse, though not countenanced, is not uncommon, and such cases are apt to be treated leniently should they come to (native) court. This might be regarded as evidence of former "group marriages," but it should be noted that a man's first heir is his brother, who succeeds to the wives in common with the rest of the "property." 602 ● 837

The same term (*nkasi*) is used by a woman for the "brothers" of her husband as for the husband himself, and their wives are *nkasi-winkasi* (= "her fellow-wives").

- (2) The "sisters" of a wife are also called *nkasi*. The husband of the eldest of a family has a prior right to marry her uterine sisters, and a semi-right to her other "sisters"; such marriages are very common. Any man who marries a woman to whom another has a prior right becomes *umukhandisi* (or *kisani*) to the ousted one. (See Definitions.) Reciprocally a woman calls her "sister's" husband *nkasi*, even after her marriage to another. 595

- (3) A man has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's "brother" as among the Thonga,¹ and the wife of the wife's "brother" is called *nkasi* (see Definitions); the son of the wife's "brother" is often called *nkasi* instead of *umwana*. There is a special term for a father's sister, which is reciprocally used by a woman for her "brother's" daughter; the term *nkasi-mwinkasi* (= "my fellow-wife") does not appear to be used by her unless and until her husband actually marries the girl. This special term is *mwinkasi*, and it can hardly be mere coincidence that it so closely resembles the Nandi term *mwinkasi* for father's sister² (no being a common Bantu prefix, usually honorific, and, on the other hand, the terminal -i merely formative).

A woman calls the son of her husband's "sister" *nkasi*. (See para. (8) below.)

- (4) All "grand-daughters," except those by marriage, are called *nkasi*, but marriage has never been allowed within living memory; the husband of these "grand-daughters" are called *umukhandisi* (*kisani*). A "grandson" is not called *nkasi* but (*umukhandisi*) *mwinkasi* (= "my consort");

¹ R. E. Seligman, "The relationship systems of the Nandi, Masi and Thonga. *Mos. April, 1917*, 68 (quoting Jansz).

² Seligman, *loc. cit.*, quoting Hella, "The Nandi."

582 they sometimes do so before the relationship is discovered, and then simply drink a protective medicine but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother (*omwipwa*) is mainly constituted by the passage of cattle. "My real mother's brother," they say "is the one who took the bulk of the marriage-cattle which my father gave for my mother", and it is between this particular brother and a woman's eldest son that the bond is strongest. Because this brother of his mother has taken "our cattle" and married with them the young man has a certain right of making free with his property during his life, the right to receive from him one cow to set up a herd of his own with, and a ~~residual~~ right of inheritance if this uncle dies childless and leaves no brothers. If his mother's brother does die without other heirs, it is only the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of his father's marriage-cattle that the young man can claim.

602 Ceremonies, and particularly funerals, are the occasions on which
764 the effective relatives of any one family meet all together, both kinsmen and affines. I have even heard kinship defined by attendance at funerals: One man argued that he was not related to another because, though they were admittedly genealogically related they did not attend the funerals in each other's families and were not therefore really kinsmen at all.

602 Known blood-kinship is a common occasion of friendship, but it
572 does not necessarily produce it, while the absence of friendship can render many of the normal kinship bonds quite inoperative. We have seen already that quarrels may destroy the relationship between half-brothers and lead to a judicial separation. On the other hand, I have observed two men meet for the first time, discover a common great-grandfather and at once become friends. A few months later the sister of one of them died and the other went to the funeral and behaved there like a close kinsman.

Proximity is another factor of great importance in the relations of kinsfolk, for while nearness of dwelling does not always make for friendship, yet a considerable distance tends to lessen it and to make attendance at funerals impossible.

606 One of the most stringent taboos in Nyakyusa life is that which separates father and daughter-in-law. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father. If she does it is believed that she will die, through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours, a painful and lingering death. And the taboo is extended from her own father-in-

643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *inyifwila* is
 779 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
 622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
 [754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa
 that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
 [789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should
 get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches
 —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who,
 since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked
 their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend
 very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may
 well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa con-
 [182] stitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and
 the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an
 integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of
 his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for
 their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in
 his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their
 village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be
 buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of
 growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear
 is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in
 Chapter VIII.

(e) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
 643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
 622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
 793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the
 individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
 [753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwal-
 [821] popo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather,
 as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and
 [688] Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their
 kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel
 between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed
 643 together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
 602 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).

578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

69

thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's⁶⁴³ chieftdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying⁶⁰² their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with⁵⁷⁸ his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus,^[57] the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chieftdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion-makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

Then, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*sili nimindu ingulube*).'^[778] 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) the shades are angry.'^[775]

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

36/ leaving a strip of pasture between them, but when the area became
 56/ crowded the junior heir would establish a colony at some distance.
 63/ With the increasing density of population, and of the acreage
 cultivated by each family, the buffer strips between chiefdoms are
 disappearing.

The more closely related chiefs are the nearer their chiefdoms are likely to be, as will be apparent if the map on p. 87 is compared with the genealogies I and II, but the pattern of splitting and expansion was continually modified by conquest and absorption. For example, the descendants of Mwaipasi (81) of the junior line have no chiefdom, and the descendants of Mwamwifu (84) were defeated and absorbed by Mwaipopo II (116), and the junior house of Mwakisambwe (30) appears never to have established itself. His second son named in the genealogy, Mwamukinga II (44), was a full brother of the senior heir Mwamukinga I (43), not the heir of the second house. And of the descendants of Mwankyuse (33) only one heir appears to have established himself in each generation.

Although a chiefdom was surrounded by pasture land with unoccupied savannah forest beyond it, when the heirs 'came out' their fathers moved. The old men gave the senior heir a site in the centre of the country, not exactly where his father had lived, but somewhere near the senior village of the past generation, and the old men moved aside to make room for the new village. The old men's villages diminished in size for many members had died and not all the heirs had come to live where their fathers had lived, and the homesteads were built on the periphery of the young men's villages. Traditionally most of the cultivated land was reallocated at the 'coming out' also, but that no longer happens. Nowadays, even where the 'coming out' is celebrated, the old men continue to cultivate until their death most of the fields they cultivated before the 'coming out', vacating only their homestead sites and adjoining gardens. The dominance of the younger generation is reflected in their compact villages, forming wide, straight avenues, in central positions in the country, while the villages of older men are often split, and their homesteads scattered without order. The avenues are felt to contribute to the dignity of the ruling generation and the older men are content to withdraw that their sons may 'display themselves' (*ukumoga*).

- [602] Age, territorial, and kinship grouping interlock in a complex

LAND AND POWER

91

fashion. Each village is occupied by an age-set and men are emphatic that age and friendship, not kinship, are the basis of a village, but the villages of fathers, sons, and grandsons commonly, though not invariably, adjoin one another, as Bujege, Igembe, and Lupando, or Lupondo, Njisi, and Iringa in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (*vide* plan, p. 101). Each section of a chiefdom comprises half the ruling generation, and interspersed with their villages are those of their fathers and sons. Men are identified by the name of their village, section, and chief; the village name defines their age-set, the name of section and chief their generation. The section name is always that of the senior village which leads it. Generation succeeds generation in office when their heirs 'come out', but the relative position of villages (age-sets) within a generation remains constant. Since chiefdoms traditionally split each generation at the 'coming out' the men of the retired generation who remained belonged to one section only; those of the other section of their generation were members of another chiefdom. The territorial arrangements reflected in the plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom on p. 101 are modified by the fact that the chiefdom has not split for four generations. In generation I Kibonde was the portion of the junior heir, Mwafungo (83), but he died young and his land and widow were inherited by the senior brother, Mwaijonga (82). The son of this leviratical union, Mwakipesile (118), went through the 'coming out' in generation II along with Mwaijonga's heirs, Ijonga (114, representing her full brother 115), and Mwakabule (117). Mwakipesile inherited Kibonde and Mwakabule inherited Kituli, but both were later defeated in war by Mwaipopo II and their land incorporated in his chiefdom. Mwakipesile's heir, Likosyela, and Mwakabule remained as subordinate chiefs. Though the girl Ijonga celebrated the 'coming out' in place of her unborn brother she could not rule, and Mwaiteteja, son of Mwaijonga II (younger full brother of 82) acted for her. He was finally defeated by Mwaipopo II and fled to the periphery of the country. Kabula was his village, and he was subordinate to Mwaipopo, not independent.

In generation III the chiefdom did not split because by that time the British administration was in control, and the territorial division remained much the same, Igembe and Njisi becoming the senior villages in place of Bujege and Lupondo, with Mwan-kuga (150) and Mwaseba (152) as the young chiefs. Kibonde,

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561
631
[602]

[173]

[796]
[643]177
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177 Kituli, and Kabula still remained somewhat detached. In genera-
 631 tion IV the second heir, Mwabungulu (178), has moved out to the
 561 forest and the area occupied and ruled by Mwaijonga and Mwai-
 popo is still one, with a division between Lupando and Iringa.
 Kibonde is fully absorbed into Lupando, and Kituli and Kabula
 into Iringa—no descendants of Mwakipesile of Kibonde and
 Mwakabule of Kituli went through the 'coming out' with Mwan-
 yilu as chiefs. Kibonde, Kituli, and Kabula are subdivided
 into age-villages of three generations, but these are not shown
 on the plan. They are spoken of by outsiders by the inclusive
 names.

561 To a European the most surprising fact about the age-organiza-
 428 tion is that a young man of the ruling generation may still choose
 to move into the homestead of his deceased father or elder brother.
 We knew one young man, who had been spoken of as a possible
 village headman at the coming out of Mwanyilu, but shortly
 before the 'coming out' he chose to move into the homestead of his
 deceased father in Lupondo village (where his father in turn had
 inherited) even though he might have inherited his father's
 wealth in wives and stock and returned to his own village of
 Masoko, after completing the ritual of death and inheritance. Our
 informants insisted that, though the young men might rule, the
 older generation were the more honoured, and in inheriting from
 his father this man was classified as a member of his father's
 generation. Nevertheless many young men do *not* choose to move
 into the village of the father or elder brother from whom they
 inherit, and the villages of old men decrease in size and finally
 disappear altogether.

602 The relation between kinship and territorial grouping cannot
 361 easily be indicated by plans and genealogies for though in theory
 166 each village consists of 'sons' of a village of the previous
 561 generation (as shown in the table facing p. 91) there is con-
 631 siderable movement from one village to another, and the members
 of any adult village usually prove to have come from a number of
 different villages, though a boy's village consists of sons of adjoining
 villages. The table of members of three of the villages of
 Mwai popo's chiefdom illustrates this (*vide* pp. 224-6). An analysis
 of genealogies showing where different members live gives much the
 same picture. Though the shortage of land in the coffee-growing
 chiefdoms of the hills and the rice-growing chiefdoms of the plain
 is tending to obliterate the age-village organization, the old

LAND AND POWER

93

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an office and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the grandson, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office¹ emerges, among the

¹ I. Cunison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 122; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 24; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu, in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3.

130 COMMUNAL RITUALS OF THE NYAKYUSA

787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/2/37) Kasitile went to Nsesa in Kituli village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nsoki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Ndembwe's. It said: Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngatele nasyo inwiti*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the mourners shave off is called "the hair of the corpse".

QUESTION: What are you going to do then?

KASITILE: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have bound me may go out of my body.

QUESTION: And the bull?

KASITILE: If I can find one I shall kill it.

QUESTION: Who will be there?

[793] KASITILE: The priests will be there, Ngulyo, Kissogota, Njobakosa, Mwalukuta and Mwakasukula,¹ and also Mwaipopo (116) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ndi nkulumba*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwaikambo, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills; here things are bad.

QUESTION: But they also have shades?

[775] KASITILE: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the [178] puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to consult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination. 787 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a 791 doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe 753 and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain!" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

SANGU: There was a quarrel there.

¹ The last two are priests of Mbyanga (*vide* p. 80) who did not in fact come. Mwamakunda, Kasitile's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

MEDICINES

145

(b) MEDICINES AND MORALITY

Doctors classify most of their medicines in terms of the supposed mystical causes of disease, and the determining factor in diagnosis is what quarrels have occurred in the patient's circle of kinsmen and friends, or what wrongdoing he has on his conscience. The medicines mentioned to us by various doctors were for treatment of sickness caused by 'the breath of men', by sorcery, by vengeance magic, by the protective medicine put on wives, by the anger of the shades or living senior relatives, by incest, by spearing or binding with ropes,¹ or abnormal birth. Only a few of the medicines listed were for the treatment of observable symptoms such as fever, too frequent periods, or swelling after snake-bite, rather than the supposed mystical cause. 278 753

The emphasis on discovering the mystical cause and counter-acting it was shown very clearly when Godfrey Wilson accompanied Mwakyonde, the doctor, to the home of a patient, a young man so weak that he could not lift a limb. Mwakyonde spent two minutes examining him, and provided leaves with which he was poulticed, and a medicine which was rubbed into cuts made all over his body, but the greater part of the day was devoted to discussing the quarrel between kinsmen, from which his illness was thought to have arisen, to persuading the kinsmen to 'speak out', and to preparing and administering a medicine which would cause the death of any one of them who was working sorcery against another. 753 578 [757]

Medicine for the treatment of a disease is held to be ineffective—at the best a temporary palliative—unless the underlying cause is discovered and dealt with. For example, doctors spoke of possessing a medicine against *ilyepa*, the disease caused by a kinsman to whom a debt in cattle is due, but it is not effective alone. 'The wrongdoer drinks medicine and pays his kinsman. He must pay, for though the medicine may cure him temporarily the disease will come again if he does not pay his debt.'

The ultimate cause of disease is believed to be friction in social relationships—a breach in moral law—and so the study of medicines takes us directly to problems of morality. There is a deep-rooted conviction that medicines will not be effective if there is quarrelling in the family which uses them. This applies not only to medicines used in sickness, but also to those for protection [602]

¹ *op. cit.*, pp. 172-9.

RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

219

structure? And how far does the new economic and political organization produce a change in religion? These theoretical questions can be answered only by a series of comparative studies. Here there is evidence for one area alone, and the connexions which we postulate can be established only if they hold in a whole range of societies. 182
769
797

Christianity implies an emergence from the nexus of kinship, for the worshipping group is two or three believers, not a body of kinsmen, and conversion is a personal choice. This is more obvious in a missionary church than in one long established, for, as we have seen, the convert in a pagan community must withdraw from his kinsfolk to become a Christian,¹ but it remains true, even in a Christian society. The new doctrine implies a body of believers—a Church. The particular form varies, but the Church has appeared wherever the Christian faith has been established. In short, we argue that the change in religion necessarily disrupts an organization based primarily on kinship and establishes a new type of organization based partly on voluntary association. With the change from the ritual of the lineage to the ritual of the Church the authority and leadership of senior kinsmen is diminished; they are replaced by 'elders' and priests or pastors whose basis of authority is not birth, but selection by the Church. Furthermore, association for worship becomes a pattern for association in other fields, and the Church is the training ground among the Nyakyusa, as it has been among so many other peoples, for organizers of other types of societies. 182
797
795
602

And not only is kinship subordinated to faith; the forms of kinship are themselves modified. From the time of their first arrival the missionaries have taught that Christianity implies monogamy and they have baptized no polygynist who does not put away his additional wives. This teaching has been questioned by many Africans and by some European missionaries themselves, who doubt the wisdom of persuading a man already married to send away his wives—or even of countenancing such an action. But the rule of monogamy has remained as a condition of membership in all the Churches with European connexions.² It has been rejected, as we have seen, by two of the 'independent' African 182
595
797

¹ *ibid.*, pp. 197-9.

² The rule was suspended for a brief period in one mission working not far from the Nyakyusa area, but was later enforced. cf. Lyndon Harries in *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life* (edited by A. Phillips), pp. 341-2.